

view, but which, in case of necessity demanding it, would permit of the taking of a step further in advance than what was permissible under the present act. (Hear hear.) At the time that the Conciliation Act was passed there was some criticism of the measure on the ground that any action under it must be purely voluntary. It was argued that in certain cases this was not likely to prove effective enough, and that there should be some element of compulsion. It was this element of compulsion which constituted the new feature of the bill for the settlement of railway labor disputes which I introduced into the House last session. It appeared to the Government that the interest of the public in *the uninterrupted operation of public railways* is of a nature which does not warrant the railways to fail in their duty as common carriers to the public because of any dispute with their employees, and that if the immediate parties to such dispute are unable to settle their difference the public have a right to intervene and provide the proper machinery for the settlement of such differences without the railways in the meantime ceasing operations and failing in their duty to the public. (Cheers.)

#### Criticism Answered.

In this country compulsory arbitration in any form was a new departure. On introducing the measure I stated that there was no intention of pressing it to a conclusion at that session, but that the Government's desire was rather to outline the plan to be given to the public for its consideration in the hope that before next session we would be favored with such criticism and suggestions as would enable us to formulate a measure carrying with it *the endorsement of public opinion*. Some criticisms have been received, the bulk of them being apparently against the measure in its entirety, and unaccompanied with suggestions favoring any system of arbitration. In view of the often declared willingness of parties to labor disputes to have their differences adjusted by arbitration, it is, I think, no doubt from oversight that they have not as yet favored the Government with suggestions looking to a measure having for its object the establishment of a system of arbitration, and I refer to the matter now in the hope that the subject may receive that public attention which its importance demands. (Hear, hear.)

#### Public Sanction Required.

In view of the anthracite coal strike I hardly think one would be chargeable with rashness in expressing the opinion that there should be in Canada a tribunal having power to investigate industrial disputes, at least in cases of such far reaching importance as railway disputes, and disputes connected with industries of a monopolistic character, which may control the actual necessities of life. (Hear, hear and applause). Whether such a measure should go so far as to make the award legally binding on the parties is another matter. It seems essential to the success of any such measure that it should have *the moral support of public opinion*—(hear, hear)—and therefore perhaps it would be better to rest its compulsory character upon that force rather than legal coercion. (Hear, hear.) These, however,